

The Loggerhead

A regional Southeast Asia newsletter
covering issues on environment, science, technology and health



In this December 2009 Issue

- Cook Stove Models ([pg. 1](#))
- H1N1 in Southeast Asia ([pg. 1](#))
- Thailand arrests 2 men on charges of illegally trading African ivory ([pg. 2](#))
- Illegal Exploitation of Bears Ha Long Undermines World Heritage Image ([pg. 2-3](#))
- Al Jazeera-Asia Visits Biodiversity Conservation Site in Vietnam ([pg. 3](#))
- What's Driving the Wildlife Trade? ([pg. 3](#))
- ASEAN-WEN Workshop ([pg. 4](#))
- Global Tiger Initiative ([pg. 4](#))
- The Pattaya Manifesto ([pg. 4-5](#))
- Clouded Leopard and Small Felid Summit Report ([pg. 5](#))
- At Risk Species in 30 Countries Benefit from U.S. Grants ([pg. 5-6](#))
- Asian antelope close to extinction ([pg. 6](#))
- Coral Triangle Update ([pg. 6-7](#))
- Forest Biodiversity and Climate Change ([pg. 7](#))
- Anti-Wildlife Trafficking Banners ([pg. 7-8](#))
- Habitat for Humanity Project ([pg. 8](#))
- Projects of Interest Around the Region ([pg. 8](#))
- Public Service Announcements ([pg. 8](#))

The U.S. Department of State's Southeast Asia Regional Environmental Affairs Office publishes this newsletter for informational purposes only and the articles contained herein should not be construed as official U.S. government position.

The Southeast Asia Regional Environmental Affairs webpage:
bangkok.usembassy.gov/embassy/reo.htm

Cook Stove Models on Display at AIT



Tanya Anderson and Hal Howard from State Department at AIT viewing the Rice Husk cook stove. © State Department

In November the U.S. - ASEAN Next Generation cook stove conference took place at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Bangkok. The event was organized by State Department Jefferson Fellows Steve Garrett and Bill Behn, and with support from the National Science Foundation, AIT, Air Force Research Office and various universities.

Inefficient cook stoves are a significant source of indoor air pollution for women and children. It is also a source of black carbon an outdoor air pollutant and source of greenhouse gases.

H1N1 in Southeast Asia

In April the H1N1 virus broke out in Mexico and the United States and quickly spread to Asia and the rest of the world. While H1N1 spread quickly to Asia and is proving to be highly contagious it is not highly fatal.

For the latest please visit:

- [WHO H1N1 influenza page](#)
- [CDC H1N1 influenza page](#)

The focus of the workshop was to look at the advances in cook stove technology, testing and business and program models.

There were various successful models on display and discussion of cook stove distribution in Darfur, Sudan, India, China, Philippines and Brazil, to mention just a few. Cook stoves are now more efficient, burn more types of fuel, can be measured more accurately and now there are successful experiences on several continents.

Thailand arrests 2 men on charges of illegally trading African ivory

Thai police arrested two men on charges of smuggling African ivory into the country to supply shops in Thailand that sell jewelry and trinkets, including to customers in the United States, authorities said.

The U.N. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species banned all international ivory trade in 1989.

"Thailand has been criticized for neglecting wildlife trafficking," said deputy commander of the police's Natural Resources and Environment division. "We had to step up and get more strict on these crimes."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which has been working with Thai authorities for the past two years, welcomed the arrests.

Steve Galster, the director of FREELAND, a group dedicated to stopping the illegal wildlife trade, said the arrests showed authorities were starting to catch up with dealers who have operated with impunity in the region for years. "This was a big success because the Thais have been looking at a lot of ivory coming into this country for the past couple of years," Galster said. But he said the arrested men were just middlemen and police need to find the masterminds.

The British-based conservation group Traffic says it has found hundreds of venues from five-star hotels to the popular Chatuchak weekend market in the capital, Bangkok, were selling tens of thousands of items, from pricey carvings of religious deities to cheaper bangles, belt buckles and knife handles.

Merchants benefit from loopholes in current laws that make it hard to crack down on the trade. The vast majority of ivory now being sold is illegal, but there is still a small amount of older stock that can be legally resold.

Much of the illegal ivory is believed smuggled from central African countries to workshops in Thailand. The products are sold to both locals and foreign tourists, and some are exported to markets in Europe and the United States.

Conservationists say the trade in illegal ivory in Asia is growing with several countries reporting major seizures this year.

In August, Thai authorities seized about two tons of African ivory worth an estimated \$1.5 million at Bangkok's international airport. Three months earlier, Philippine authorities seized 3.5 tons of elephant tusks worth an estimated \$2 million that had been transported to Manila from Tanzania, and in March, Vietnamese authorities seized 6.2 tons of higher quality African elephant tusks estimated to be worth more than \$29 million at Hai Phong Port.

Source – The Canadian Press

Illegal Exploitation of Bears in Ha Long Undermines World Heritage Image

A picturesque bay with karst outcrops towering over gentle green waters. Tourists coming from all over the world to see the spectacular Ha Long Bay, staying at our hotels, dining in our restaurants, buying from our shops, enjoying and learning about our culture. Thousands of our visitors each year sail across the calm waters of our Ha Long Bay admiring the beauty and fresh ocean air, and return home to tell others about what they have experienced, tasted and seen.

However, less than a mile away, lurks a darker side of the tourism industry at Ha Long Bay. Hundreds of bears are kept in cages, all of them illegally hunted from the wild, transported, and sold to bear farmers that have set up businesses extracting and selling bear bile in direct violation of the law, to satisfy the demand of tourists from South Korea and other Asian countries.

Over the past few months, these bile farms have attracted a lot of publicity. The farms are owned by Vietnamese businessmen, but the bear bile tourism operations are reportedly run by Koreans. Hundreds of Korean and other Asian tour groups visit the farms each year, where they witness the extraction of bile from captive bears, taste bear bile wine, and buy bear bile and other bear products, which they then are believed to smuggle out of the country in violation of the law. *(continued on page 3)*



A bear awaits a group of foreign tourists at a Ha Long bear farm. The bear will be put to sleep while bile is extracted from its gall bladder and sold to tourists in violation of the law.

"I think it is appalling that people are doing these sorts of things to bears to entertain tourists," said one visiting western tourist. "I had no idea when I came to Ha Long Bay that these sorts of things were happening just down the road. I think that it is extremely important that the authorities put a stop to this practice."

The extraction and sale of bear bile is illegal. There are dozens of alternatives to bear bile available for people who seek treatment for illnesses or other health issues. The National Forest Protection Department (FPD) reports that there are about 4,000 captive bears currently registered in Vietnam. The law, however, does not permit owners to extract or sell bile from registered bears. While some registered bear farm owners are keeping their bears as pets, many more continue to exploit bear bile in direct violation of the law.

Of particular concern are major bear farm operations with tens of bears in captivity that often entertain large groups of visitors directly under the eyes of local authorities.

ENV is committed to working with authorities to eliminate illegal trade of bears and phase out

bear farming while promoting alternatives to bear bile, and ensuring that farmers and owners of bears that violate the law, such as the bear bile tourism operations in Quang Ninh, are punished appropriately. ENV also seeks to ensure that the reputation of Vietnam's premier tourist site at Ha Long Bay is not overshadowed by the illegal activities of a few greedy businessmen in Quang Ninh.

ENV recommends that the Forest Protection Departments throughout provinces where bears are being kept and exploited for bear bile take bold steps forward and let bear farm business owners know that they must cease their illegal activities or face the full brunt of punishment under the law.

This article is from the ENV Wildlife Crime Vietnam November 2009 edition.

Al Jazeera-Asia Visits Biodiversity Conservation Site in Vietnam

On October 23, 2009, an Al Jazeera-Asia (English) crew visited a USAID pilot site in Vietnam to film a news segment about progress achieved in developing Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES). With support from the USAID-funded Asia Regional Biodiversity Conservation Program (ARBCP), Vietnam has become the first Southeast Asian country to develop a national pilot PES policy and is continuing to demonstrate the feasibility of the approach. The Al Jazeera broadcast will serve to raise awareness of PES benefits and the opportunities for replication elsewhere in the Southeast Asia region.

The video can be viewed at:

<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia-pacific/2009/10/200910297362440899.html>

Highlight a Report: What's Driving the Wildlife Trade?

In October 2008 Traffic released "A Review of Expert Opinion on Economic and Social Drivers of the Wildlife Trade and Trade Control Efforts in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam." The study consults 80 experts regarding the wildlife trade in four aforementioned Southeast Asian countries to gather their insights. The experts included individuals working for conservation organizations, government staff, and independent researchers. For full report please [click here](#).

ASEAN-WEN Workshop

Thank you to John Q. Adams for providing the summary.

On April 10-12 The Association of Southeast Asian Nations' Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) lead the International Workshop "The Forgotten Crisis: Arresting Wildlife Depletion in Asia through Strengthened Regional Cooperation and Effective Partnerships" in Pattaya, Thailand. The workshop was well received and resulted in a number of initiatives.

The workshop produced a manifesto, known as the *Pattaya Pledges*, calling on all Asian governments to fight wildlife trafficking seriously. It argues that present trends spell the end for the tiger. The Manifesto will help develop the South-east Asia and South Asia wildlife enforcement networks into fully effective and sustainable platforms. The ultimate goal is that all Asian governments cooperate in a pan-Asian wildlife enforcement network. These will have specially trained wildlife crime task forces within the national police forces and other enforcement agencies to track, monitor, investigate and share cross-border information and to stop illegal wildlife trade and arrest traffickers in the region.

The large turnout from the World Bank and many representatives from Nepal and India brought a lot of South Asian issues to the fore and set the stage for a workshop in which tiger range states prepare for the 2010 Year of the Tiger Summit. The workshop is tentatively set for October 2010. World Bank and IUCN are driving the workshop and the government of Nepal has offered to host. In addition, the Thai Prime Minister sent a letter to the workshop offering to host a Ministerial level meeting of tiger range states, the date is tentatively set for November 2009. This meeting would be a high-level push for decisive action at the 2010 Year of the Tiger Summit which heads of state will be invited to attend.

Global Tiger Initiative (GTI)

The Global Tiger Initiative (GTI) is a major effort by the World Bank that is under way and gaining momentum. The GTI was launched in 2008 by the World Bank, the Smithsonian Institution,

the Global Environment Facility, and the International Tiger Coalition, as an international collaborative platform dedicated to saving wild tigers and mainstreaming biodiversity. The delegates began preparations for the Year of the Tiger Summit in 2010 that will bring high-level political commitment to save the wild tigers, Asia's religious and cultural icon, and the symbol of environmental sustainability.

April's international workshop in Pattaya set the stage for the tiger range states to prepare a 2010 Year of the Tiger summit. The workshop is tentatively set for October 2010 and the government of Nepal has offered to host the workshop. The World Bank and IUCN are driving this workshop.

In addition, the Thai PM sent a letter to the workshop offering to host a Ministerial level meeting of tiger range states, the tentative date is set for November 2009. This meeting would be a high-level push for decisive action at the 2010 Year of the Tiger Summit which heads of state will be invited to attend.

The Pattaya Manifesto

The Pattaya Manifesto will help develop the South-east Asia and South Asia wildlife enforcement networks into fully effective and sustainable platforms. These will have specially trained wildlife crime task forces within the national police forces and other enforcement agencies to track, monitor, investigate and share cross-border information and to stop illegal wildlife trade and arrest traffickers in the region. For full text please [click here](#). Below are excerpts from the Manifesto developed by the ASEAN member nations:

The Pattaya Pledges

The governments of Asia pledge to protect natural resources from theft and destruction through:

- Crime prevention and deterrence;
- Intelligence-led enforcement, effective patrolling and anti-poaching activities;
- Effective and accountable governance and management of fragile ecosystems;
- Fostering stewardship by communities;
- Effective control of illegal domestic wildlife use;
- Reducing demand for illegal wildlife products

(continued on page 5)

The governments of Asia also pledge to disrupt and dismantle organized wildlife crime networks in source and demand countries by:

- Identifying, investigating and prosecuting significant cases, obtaining significant terms of imprisonment and fines, and seizing and forfeiting the proceeds and tools of the criminal activities;
- Using laws against corruption, money laundering, fraud, organized crime, smuggling, as well as criminal and non-conviction based forfeiture to combat wildlife crime;
- Ensuring effective collaboration and cooperation among enforcement agencies;
- Ensuring timely and effective mutual legal assistance;
- Enacting and implementing stronger legislation, which ensures penalties on a par with drug and arms trafficking

There were additional pledges made by international organizations, such as CITES and the World Bank, and from civil society organizations.

The *Manifesto* concluded with these remarks:

The participants recognize that the wildlife of Asia will continue its perilous course to extinction unless the pledges made here are kept. We do not want our grandchildren to remember us as the generation that stood by while their natural heritage was stolen and destroyed. Let us bequeath to them a healed and intact world where rivers run clear, air is clean and rich, forests are pristine and there are still wild places where wild creatures run free. Our children deserve this heritage and we must not fail them.

Clouded Leopard and Small Felid Summit Report

In the February edition of the Loggerhead we mentioned the Clouded Leopard and Small Felid Conservation Summit held January 28-30 at Kasetsart University in Bangkok, Thailand. The proceedings from that meeting have been finalized. The report discusses findings on clouded leopard and small felid research and conservation issues in the Southeast Asian range countries of Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam,

Burma, Laos, Cambodia, and Bhutan. To read the summit report please [click here](#). If you are interested in learning more about the Clouded Leopard Project please [click here](#).

At Risk Species in 30 Countries Benefit from U.S. Grants

This is an excerpt for full edition of this article please [click here](#).

U.S. agency awards \$1.5 million to protect turtles, great apes, elephants



A 7-year-old loggerhead sea turtle swims in a tank at the Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta awaiting his release back into the wild.

Washington — Turtles, gorillas and elephants are among the intended beneficiaries of \$1.5 million in international conservation grants recently announced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The grants, made available through the service's Wildlife Without Borders multinational species programs, are expected to attract an additional \$2.3 million in matching funds to help at-risk wildlife in 30 countries by combating threats like poaching, illegal trafficking, habitat loss and disease.

"These grants provide critical support for efforts targeting highly imperiled species and habitats throughout the world," the service's acting director, Rowan Gould, said in a prepared statement April 9. "They enable local communities, partner organizations, universities and governments to conserve and manage their natural heritage."

In the Western Hemisphere, funded projects include protecting leatherback sea turtles at one of the few remaining nesting beaches in the eastern Pacific on Costa Rica; providing a 60-day course in natural resources conservation for 16 wildlife professionals currently working in protected areas; and supporting field work to protect, monitor and manage at-risk species and their habitats.

The funds will support leatherback turtle conservation efforts in Indonesia, Gabon, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Angola, Sao Tome and Principe, Equatorial Guinea and Vietnam; protection of loggerhead turtles in Oman, Japan, Mexico and Cape Verde; assistance for olive ridley turtle populations in Mexico, Costa Rica, Trinidad and Tobago, Nicaragua and India; and protection of hawksbill turtles in Mexico, Barbados, Nicaragua, Panama and Vietnam.

A grant from the service's Marine Turtle Conservation Fund will support a coalition of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Cape Verde to better coordinate and expand efforts to protect and survey nesting loggerhead turtles, which suffer from heavy illegal poaching. Up to 25 percent of the nesting females are killed each year. The grant will fund a pre-season workshop with NGO representatives and government officials to improve private-public cooperation, identify priority actions and support expanded protection of nesting females.

Thanks to the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund, established by Congress in 2004, more than \$5 million in direct grants and matching funds have supported nearly 100 turtle-conservation projects around the world. (See "[Threats to Marine Turtle Raise International Concern](#).")

New-found Asian antelope said close to extinction

GENEVA (Reuters) - The Saola antelope, discovered in 1992 by scientists in remote valleys on the borders of Laos and Vietnam, is on the brink of extinction from hunting with dogs and snaring, the nature body IUCN said on Thursday.

Resembling the desert antelopes of Asia but more closely related to wild cattle, the Saola has rarely been seen or photographed, the Swiss-based organization said.

"We are at a point in history where we have a small but rapidly closing window of opportunity to conserve this extraordinary animal," said IUCN expert William Robichaud.

"Its wild population may number only in the dozens, and it is certainly not more than a few hundred," said his colleague Barney Long in a statement issued from IUCN headquarters at Gland, near Geneva.

If it dies out in the wild, it would mean total disappearance of the antelope -- which has distinctive white facial markings and long, tapering horns -- because none are held anywhere in zoos anywhere in the world, IUCN said.

This meant it would not be possible to breed it in captivity and reintroduce it later into the wild.

The only Saola captured alive and held for any length of time -- in a Laotian menagerie in 1996 -- survived only a few weeks, according to the body, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

The Saola's fate was the focus of an emergency meeting in Laos last month of specialists from around the south-east Asian region where another wild cattle species, the Kouprey, is almost certainly doomed to disappear, according to IUCN.

It said the secretive Saola, which has only a small range in the Annamite Mountains along the Laos-Vietnam frontier, could not be saved unless the two countries launched an intensive campaign to remove traps and reduce hunting.

There was also a need to heighten awareness in the two countries, and among the global conservation community at large, of the threat to the Saola, and for more funding from donors to support efforts to preserve it, the IUCN declared. (Editing by [Alister Doyle](#))

Highlights from the Six Coral Triangle Countries (CT6)

Leaders officially launch the Coral Triangle Initiative.

On May 15, the leaders of Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands, and Timor Leste met at a six-country summit in *(continued on page 7)*

Manado, Indonesia and signed the declaration officially launching the Coral Triangle Initiative and endorsed its Regional Plan of Action (RPOA). USAID and its partners are working with the Coral Triangle Countries to support implementation of their RPOA. The RPOA addresses five overall goals: 1) priority seascapes; 2) ecosystem approach to managing fisheries and other marine resources; 3) marine protected areas; 4) climate change adaptation; and 5) threatened species.

Additional \$1.6 Million Support to CTI Announced

In the May 12 press conference presided by Ambassador Cameron Hume during the Word Ocean Conference and CTI Summit in Manado, US Assistant Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere Mary Glackin and USAID Mission Director Walter North jointly announced an additional pledge of \$1.6 million to support CTI regional and national activities, starting with Indonesia.

CTI Regional Governance Structure Confirmed

On October 20-22 in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, senior officials from the six Coral Triangle countries adopted the CTI regional governance structure confirming how the countries will collectively preserve and manage the world's epicenter of marine biodiversity. At the USAID supported meeting, the officials determined the process for establishing a permanent secretariat. The six countries also agreed to issue a common CTI position elevating ocean and coastal concerns at the international treaty negotiations on climate change in Copenhagen.

Coral Triangle Atlas Website Launched

The website is an online Geographic Information System (GIS) database that can provide governments, nongovernment organizations and researchers access to spatial data on the Coral Triangle region at a local and regional scale. The CT Atlas regularly collects and consolidates

spatial data on marine habitats, biodiversity, physical oceanography, socio-economy and other relevant indicators that will facilitate the management of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) and MPA networks across the Coral Triangle region. To access the website please visit <http://ctatlas.reefbase.org>.

For the latest information please visit www.uscti.org or now on facebook at www.facebook.com/coraltriangle

Forest Biodiversity and Climate Change

Forests are particularly vulnerable to climate change because even small changes in temperature and precipitation can have significant effects on forest growth. It has been shown that an increase of 1 degree Celsius in the temperature can modify the functioning and composition of forests.

Many forest-dwelling large animals, 1/2 of the large primates, and nearly 9% of all known tree species are already at some risk of extinction. Woody tree species are less able to shift poleward with changing climatic conditions. Forest contain 80% of all the carbon stored in terrestrial vegetation and deforestation and land-clearing activities emit about 1.7 billion metric tons of carbon per year into the atmosphere. Hence, the conservation of forests offers important opportunities to protect biodiversity and mitigate climate change.

Forests provide a perfect example of the links that exist between biodiversity and climate change. On the one hand, forests are threatened by the impacts of climate change but on the other hand have the potential to mitigate climate change through carbon sequestration.

For more information visit the Convention on Biological Diversity [website](#)

Anti-Wildlife Trafficking Banners Installed Along Thai-Burmese and Thai-Malaysian Borders

Throughout this year, FREELAND has been working with Thai Customs to install eye-catching anti-wildlife trafficking banners in multiple languages at airports and key checkpoints along the shared borders with Laos, Cambodia, Burma and Malaysia. (continued on page 8)



Customs officials installing banners to raise awareness about cross-border wildlife crime © FREELAND

On September 22-23, 2009, 20 banners featuring endangered species and telephone hot line numbers for reporting wildlife crime were distributed to airports and Customs Houses in Thailand's deep South. Banners have also been installed at checkpoints on the Thai-Burma and Thai-Malaysia borders, completing a national rollout designed to increase awareness of the illegality and impacts of trade in protected species, as well as vigilance among Customs officials to act against wildlife trafficking.

FREELAND thanks Thai Customs, Esso (Thailand) Public Company Limited and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for their support of this campaign.

Habitat for Humanity Press Conference

Chiang Mai joined Habitat for Humanity's Thailand Chairman and Habitat's Vice President for Asia-Pacific at a November 4 press event to promote the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Work Project, "The Mekong Build 2009." The project's focal point will be Chiang Mai, where the Carters and nearly 3,000 volunteers from around the world – including Amb. and Mrs. John as well as a couple dozen Consulate staff – built 82 houses on November 15-20.

Around the Region

Much is happening in South east Asia! Below are web links to a few of the projects throughout the region that are of interest.

- [Burma Rivers Network](#)
- Fair Earth Consulting Project in Chiang Mai, Thailand links conscious consumers and natural farmers through [Community Supported Agriculture](#)
- UNICEF Support in [Nias Island, Indonesia](#)
- [What's Ahead @ ESCAP](#) (UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific)

Public Service Announcements

FREELAND Foundation, a Bangkok-based environmental and human rights organization, has produced a Public Service Announcement (PSA) to build awareness of the illegal wildlife trade. You can see this 30 sec PSA at: <http://free-land.org>

Conservationist Dr. Jane Goodall reminds us that reducing the demand for illegally trafficked goods will prevent the killing of endangered species. The U.S. Department of State showcases this Public Service Announcement (PSA) in partnership with WildAid. You can view Dr. Goodall's [Don't Buy It](#) and [One Family](#) Public Service Announcements on YouTube.